Become a Google Power User: Tips and Techniques

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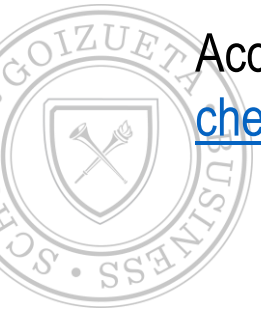
Access our Advanced Google Features cheat sheet.



Mastering Google's Power Search Commands

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Power Search Commands: General Tips

Word order counts
Position keywords in the order of importance by placing the most critical terms first.

Use fewer words, but the right words
The more precise and targeted your keywords, the better the results.

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Power Search Commands: Key Concepts

You will have more success searching if you distill your topic down to key concepts. Then build your keywords around these concepts.

Example topic: “I want to find information on innovations of medical devices in healthcare, specifically related to cancer.”

Key concepts:

- innovation
- medical devices
- healthcare
- cancer

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Power Search Commands: Synonyms

Next, brainstorm synonyms for your key concepts to broaden your search and ensure you do not miss relevant information. Keep in mind, authors may use different keywords to describe concepts.

Example topic: "I want to find information on innovations of medical devices in healthcare, specifically related to cancer."

Key Concepts:

- innovation
- medical devices
- healthcare
- cancer

Possible synonyms for each concept:

- *Innovation* > disruption
- *medical devices* - sometimes a keyword stands on its own without synonyms
- *healthcare* > health, medical, medicine
- *cancer* > oncology

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Power Search Commands: Trigger Words

Trigger words provide focus and clarity. Think of them as action words that drive Google to return results that target the kinds of content you are looking for.

Commonly used trigger words include:

- data
- statistics
- surveys
- impact
- trends
- ROI
- strategy
- growth
- challenges
- outlook

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Power Search Commands: Trigger Words

Think about paring trigger words that reflect a similar intent:

- data / statistics
- surveys / studies
- trends / outlook / ROI / future / forecast / predications
- strategy / challenges
- growth / decrease / decline
- behaviors / attitudes / motivation
- innovation / disruption / creativity

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Power Search Commands: Phrases

Always place phrases in quotation marks (“ ”) so that Google searches for the words together in the exact order you wrote them.

Example phrases:

- “stock options”
- “North Carolina”
- “self-driving” – Treat hyphenated words as a phrase.
- “autonomous vehicles”
- “medical devices”

Conducting a search for *autonomous vehicles* without quotation marks will return many extraneous results. Without quotation marks, results will include:

- The word *autonomous* anywhere
- The word *vehicles* anywhere
- *Autonomous vehicles* as a phrase

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Power Search Commands: Connectors - AND

Google looks for all the individual keywords to appear in each returned document or website. It automatically inserts AND between each search term, unless you tell it otherwise.

Since AND is the default, you do not have to include it in your search. But if you choose to, it must be in all capital letters (AND).

Example:

- Healthcare medical devices innovation
  - Google interprets this search as: healthcare AND medical AND devices AND innovation
  - It requires that all 4 search terms be present, in any order
- Healthcare “medical devices” innovation
  - Searching “medical devices” is a more precise search, yielding fewer but more relevant results

Power Search Commands: Connectors - OR

Google requires at least one of the individual keywords to appear in each returned document or website.

- Use OR to separate synonyms, e.g., similar concepts
- Always type OR in all capital letters
- Remember that the benefit of using synonyms is to find the most relevant results
- Unlike AND, you must separate all synonyms with OR

Examples:

- automobiles OR “motor vehicles” OR cars
- innovation OR creativity OR disruption

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Power Search Commands: Logic – Combining AND & OR

Use Boolean connectors to create a clearly expressed logic search string, one that will drive Google to return the best content for your research

Structuring your search:

- (synonym OR synonym) AND (synonym OR synonym)

Examples:

- (cancer OR oncology) AND “medical devices” AND (innovation OR disruption)
- (phone OR “mobile device” OR smartphone) AND usage AND (millennials OR “gen z”)

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Power Search Commands: Logic – Combining AND & OR

Now let's break down the logic:

Example: (cancer OR oncology) AND "medical devices" AND (innovation OR disruption)

- (at least one of the keywords) AND the phrase AND (at least one of the keywords) must be present in each document or website
- Looks for content that contains: either keywords *cancer* OR *oncology* AND the phrase "*medical devices*" AND either keyword *innovation* OR *disruption*

Example: (phone OR "mobile device" OR smartphone) AND usage AND (millennials OR "gen z")

- (at least one of the keywords or phrases) AND (at least one of the keywords OR phrases) must be present in each document or website
- Look for content that contains: either keyword OR phrases *phone* OR "*mobile device*" OR *smartphone* AND the word usage AND either keyword/phrase *millennials* OR "*gen z*"

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What does this look like in practice? Let's put it together.

Research topic:

- Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Here are the factors we need to consider:

- What are the essential key concepts?
- What are the essential keywords or phrases?
- What are the most relevant synonyms for these keywords and phrases?
- Are there trigger words that might help?
- What should our word order be?
- What logic should we use in our search statement?

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Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Step 1: *Start with key concepts*

- sustainability
- fashion
- industry

Step 3: *Which trigger words will help provide specificity?*

- trends / outlook / future
- impact / benefits
- strategy / challenges

Step 2: *What are the relevant synonyms?*

- **sustainability**
  - “eco-friendly”
  - environmental
  - green
  - recycle
- **fashion**
  - clothing
  - apparel
- **industry**
  - market

ASK a Librarian

Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Now, group synonyms for each concept together with OR:

Concept 1: sustainability OR “eco-friendly” OR environmental OR green OR recycle

Concept 2: fashion OR clothing OR apparel

Concept 3: industry OR market

Next, group the trigger words:

trends OR impact OR outlook OR strategy

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Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Put everything together to create a targeted and strong Google search statement.

(sustainability OR “eco-friendly” OR environmental OR green OR recycle) AND (fashion OR clothing OR apparel) AND (industry OR market) AND (trends OR impact OR outlook OR strategy)

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Targeting the Most Credible Sources

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Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information

Use advanced search functions to drive Google to return content from credible, authoritative sources.

Consider:

- Who collects the information?
- Where does that information live?
- Who writes about your topic?

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Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information – Domains

Think about the different type of "sources" that gather and publish information and data. Sources can be a type organization, a publication, an individual.

Target specific domains, e.g., government, education, non-profits, NGOs, countries, or even a specific website.

- site:edu
- site:org (typically used for non-profits)
- site:gov
- site:emory.edu

Place the *site:* command at the very end of the search statement.

- enrollment AND college AND site:emory.edu
- enrollment AND college AND (data OR statistics) site:gov

Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information – INURL

Target a specific source's content. Think of this function as a shortcut when you do not know the complete URL.

Examples:

- inurl:census
- inurl:deloitte
- inurl:nytimes
- inurl:youtube
- Inurl:worldbank

Place the *inurl:* command at the very end of the search statement.

Examples:

- streaming AND (netflix OR amazon OR hulu) AND (trends OR outlook) AND inurl:mckinsey
- travel AND (industry OR market) AND (strategy OR challenges OR risks) AND inurl:(nytimes OR fortune OR forbes)

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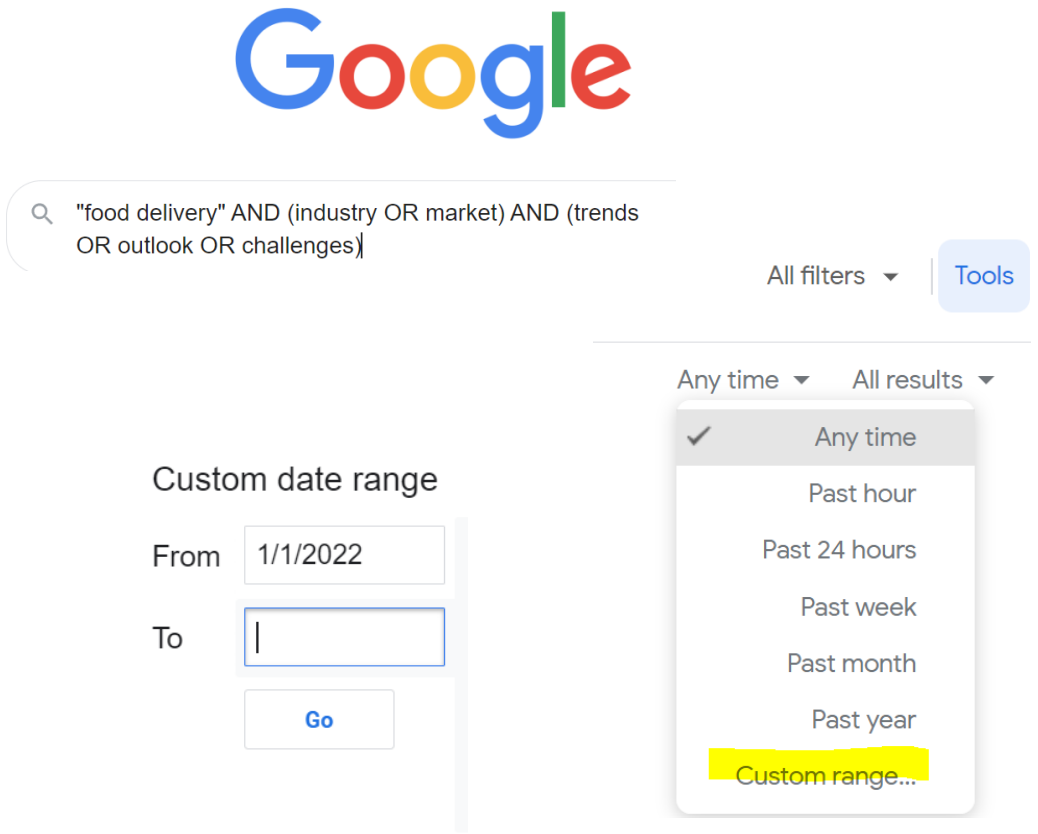
Power Search Commands: Publication Date Filter - Tools

Use the *Tools* function to limit the publication date of returned content to a specific date or date range (e.g., Past Week, Past Month, Past Year, between 2021-2024, etc.). The default is Any Time (i.e., all publication dates).

Example:

Research shifts in the food delivery services industry since 2022.



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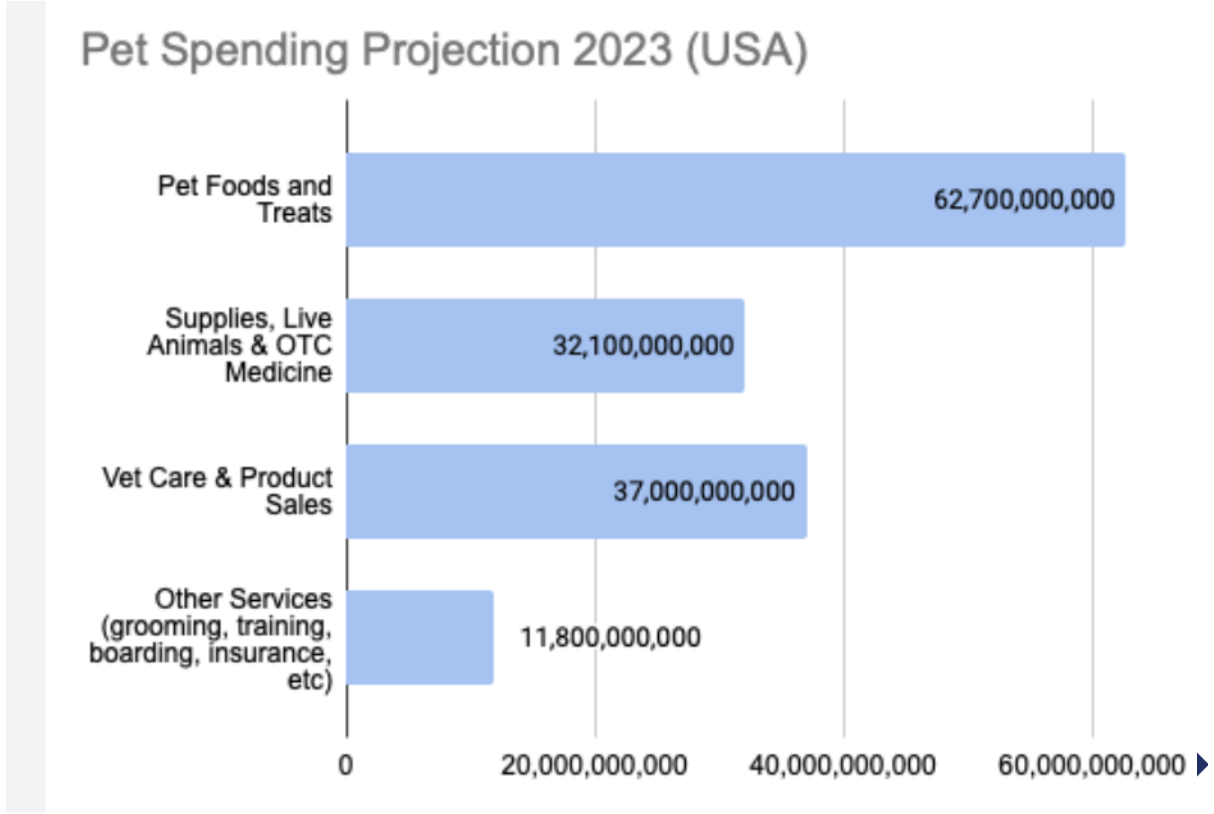
Power Search Commands: Data Years Filter

Search for a range of numbers by adding two dots between two numbers. Useful for locating historical, current, or forecasted data for specific year(s) imbedded within documents and website content.

Examples:

- 2022..2028 – looks for data for the years between 2022 and 2028.
    - Pets AND consumer AND spending AND (sales OR revenues) AND 2021..2023

Note: Always add extra years to your date ranges to make sure you don't miss relevant data and place the years at the end of the search statement.



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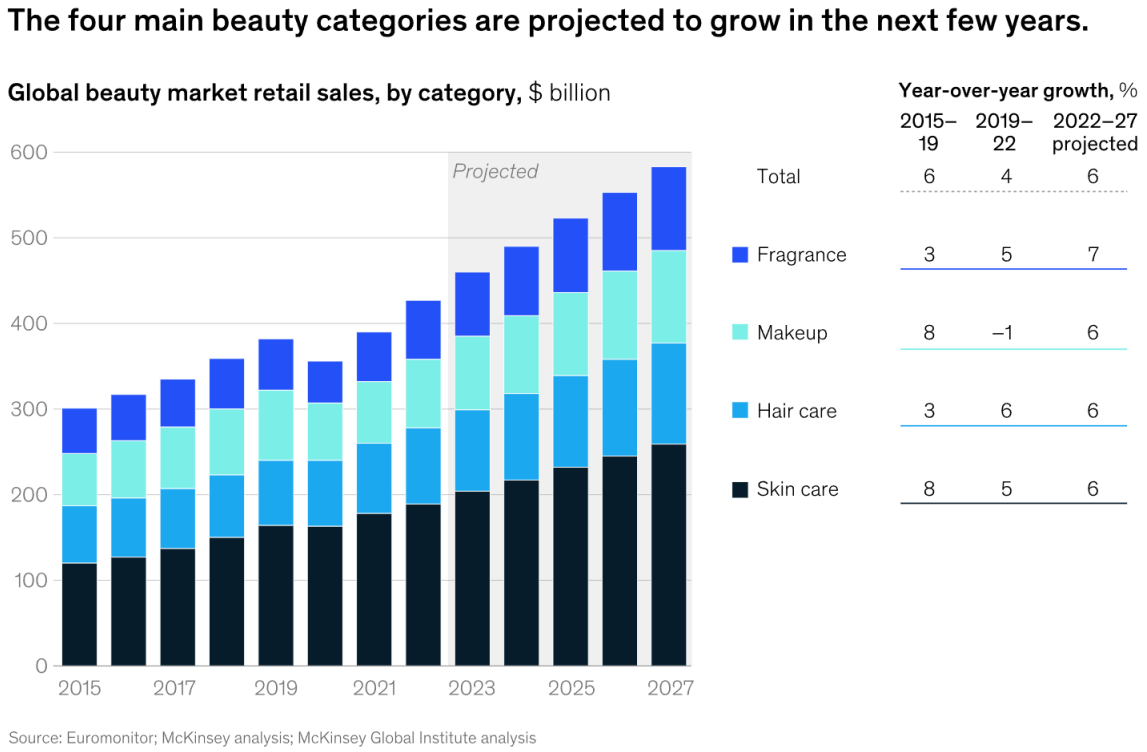
Power Search Commands: Google Images

Use Google Images to locate data visualizations.

- Locate rankings for companies, industries, brands, etc.
- Locate data you might expect to find in a market research report, such as market size, market share, CAGAR, and market segmentation.
- Locate data about consumer purchasing behaviors, preferences, or spending.

After running the search in Google, click on *Images*.

Beauty AND (industry OR market) AND consumer AND purchasing AND (data OR statistics)



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Google Scholar: Linking to Emory Libraries for Efficient Article Access

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Google Scholar and Library Linking

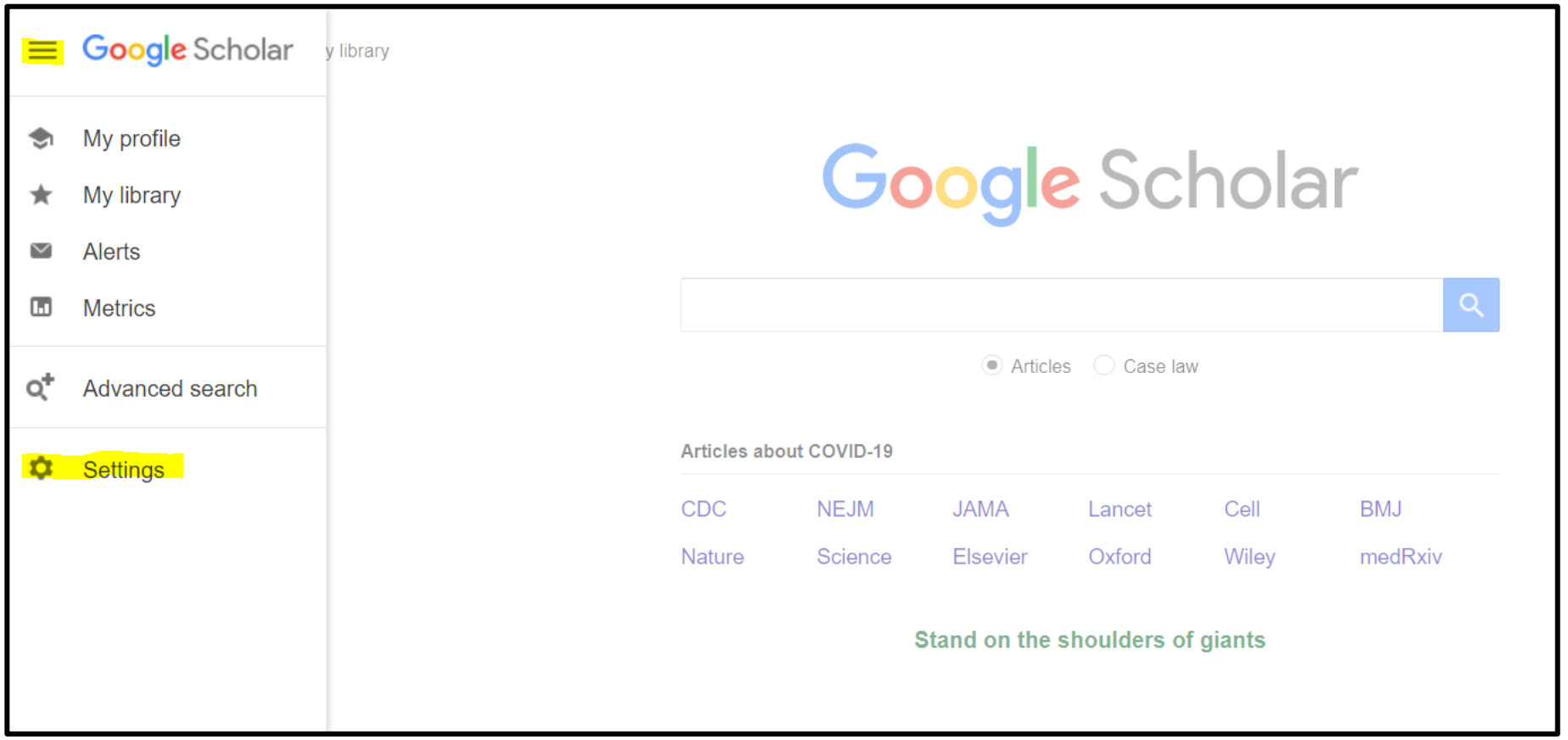
You can connect Emory Libraries' content to your Google Scholar account.

While this feature does not search all of Emory's electronic resources (and therefore is not a substitute for database searching), it can be an excellent springboard into further research by helping you identify some journal articles on your topic.

Linking Your Google Scholar Account

First, go to Google Scholar and select the three lines in the upper left-hand corner.

Then, select the Settings option.



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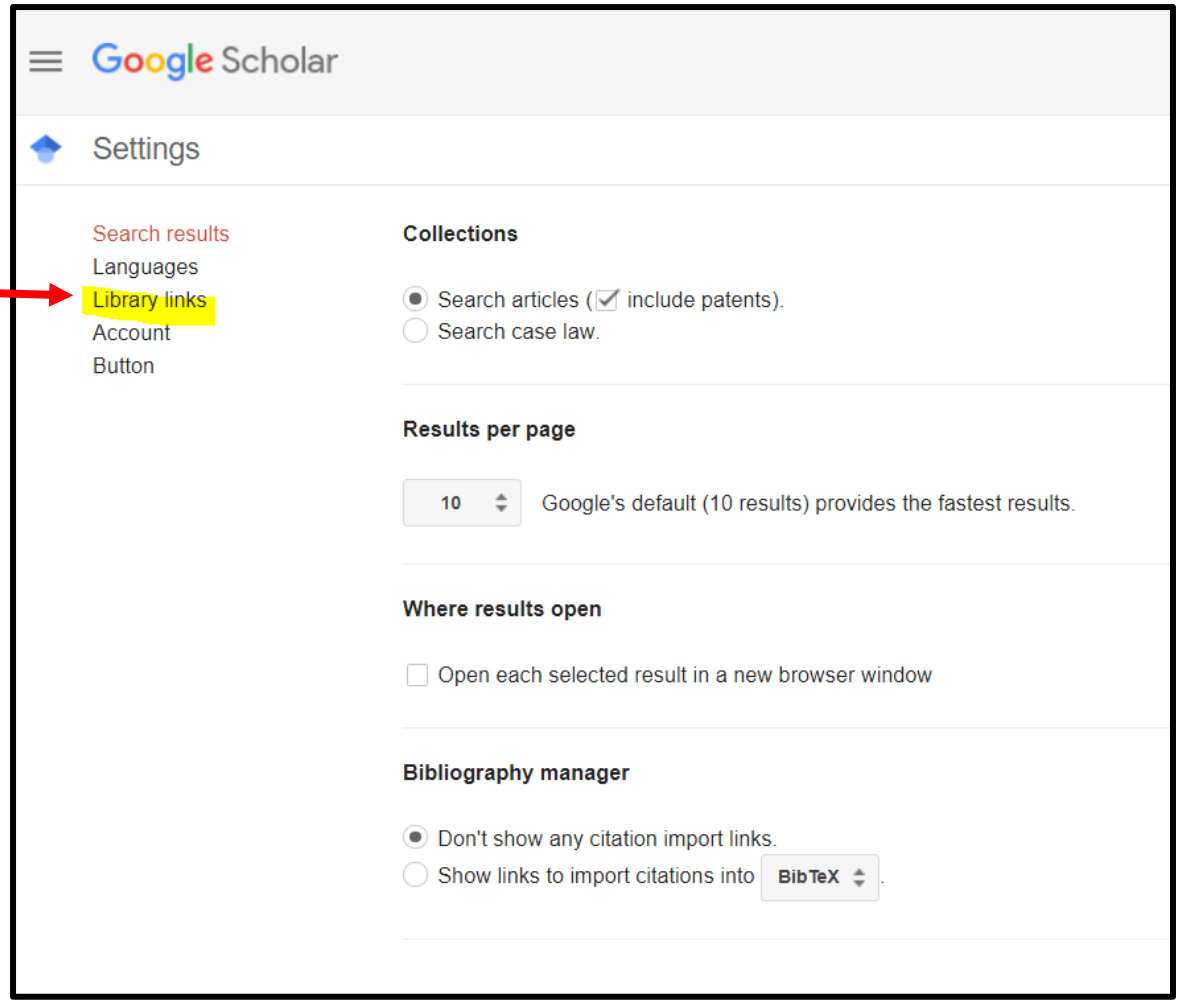
Linking Your Google Scholar Account, cont.

Next, select Library links.



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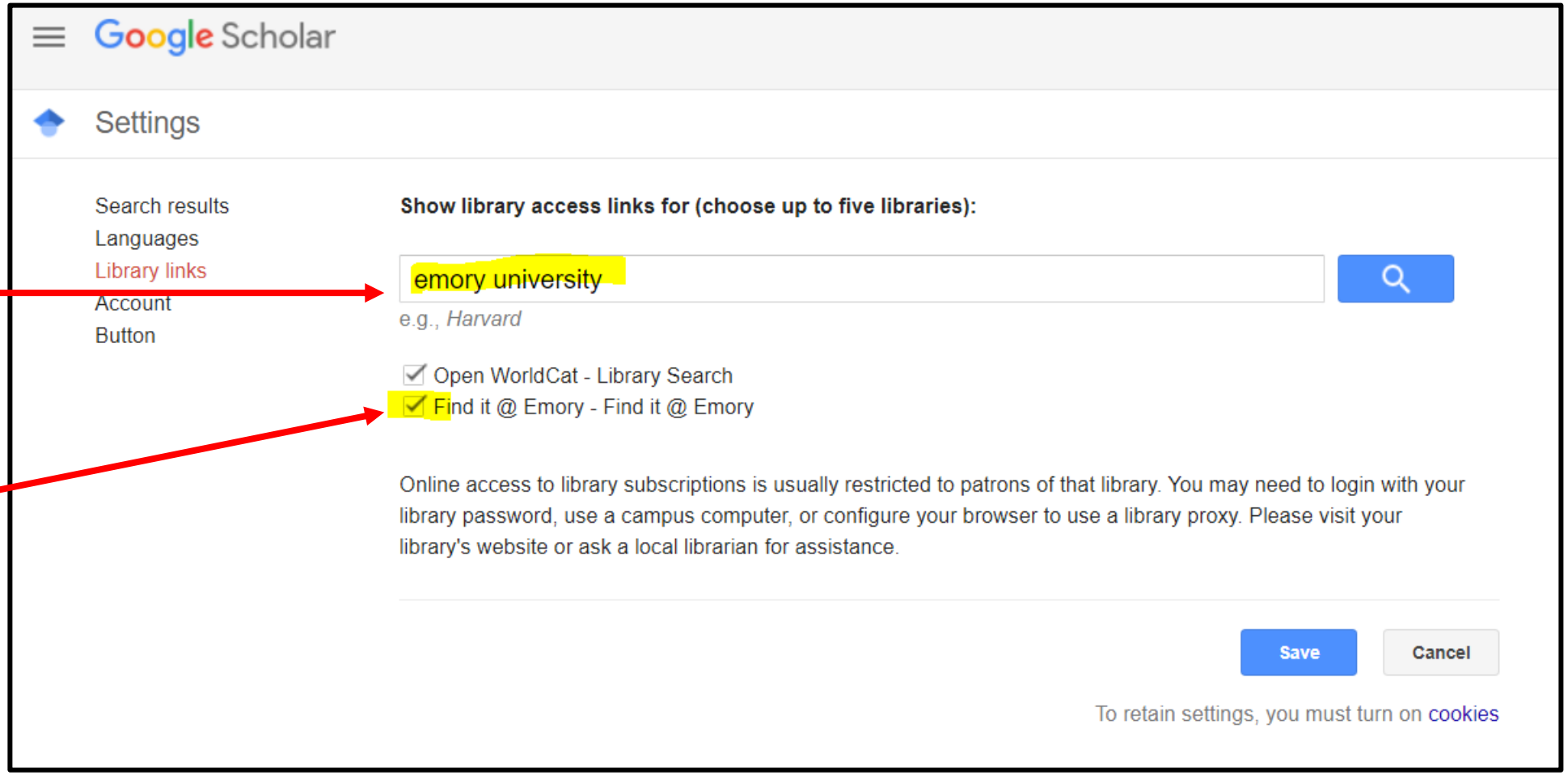
Type *Emory University* into the search bar and hit enter.

Select the check box next to *Find it @ Emory* and then hit Save.

Now you are ready to search!



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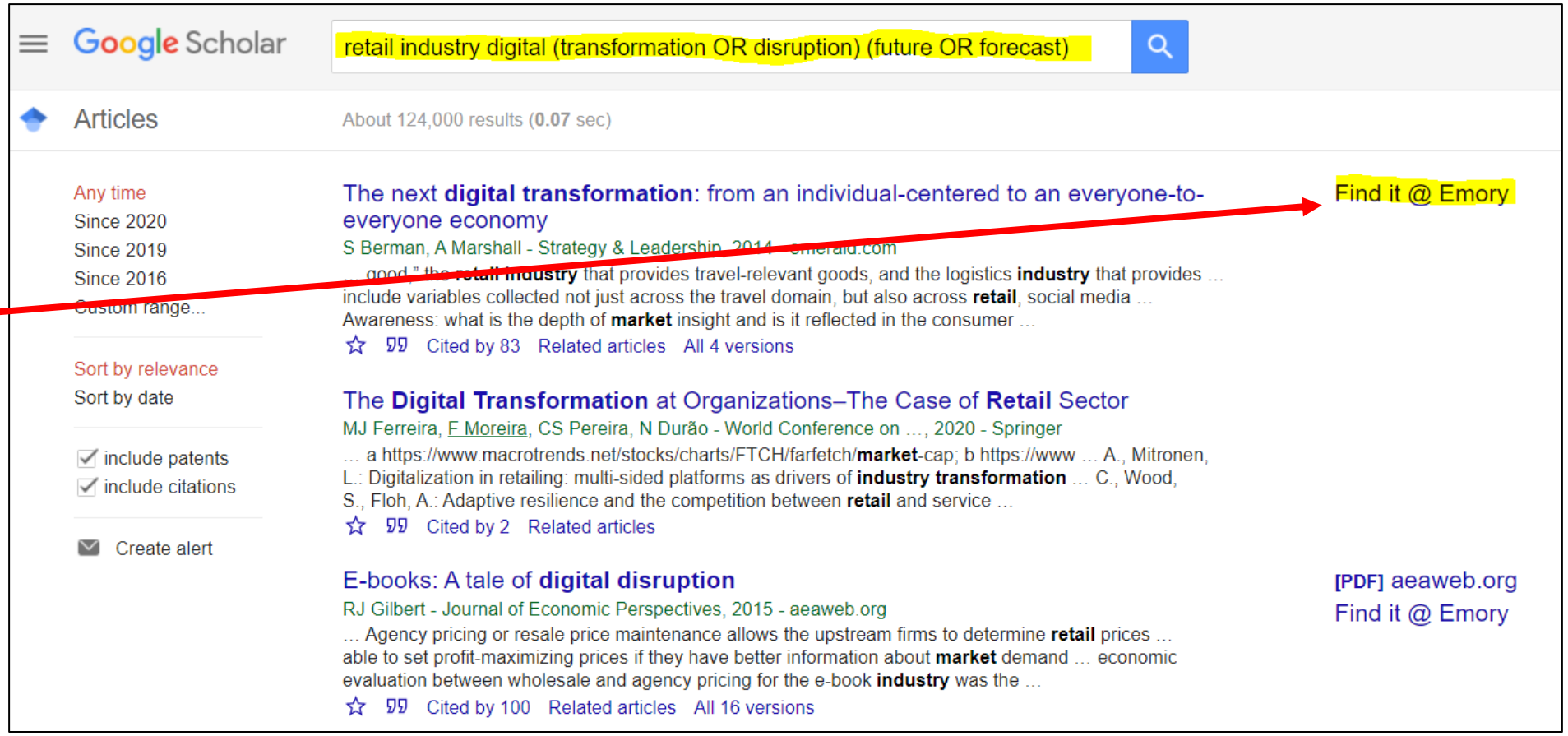
You can tell that library linking has worked when you conduct a search and *Find it @ Emory* shows up to the right of some results. This lets you know that Emory provides access to that particular resource.

Note: the linking feature does not search 100% of Emory's holdings and is not intended to be a substitute for a database search.



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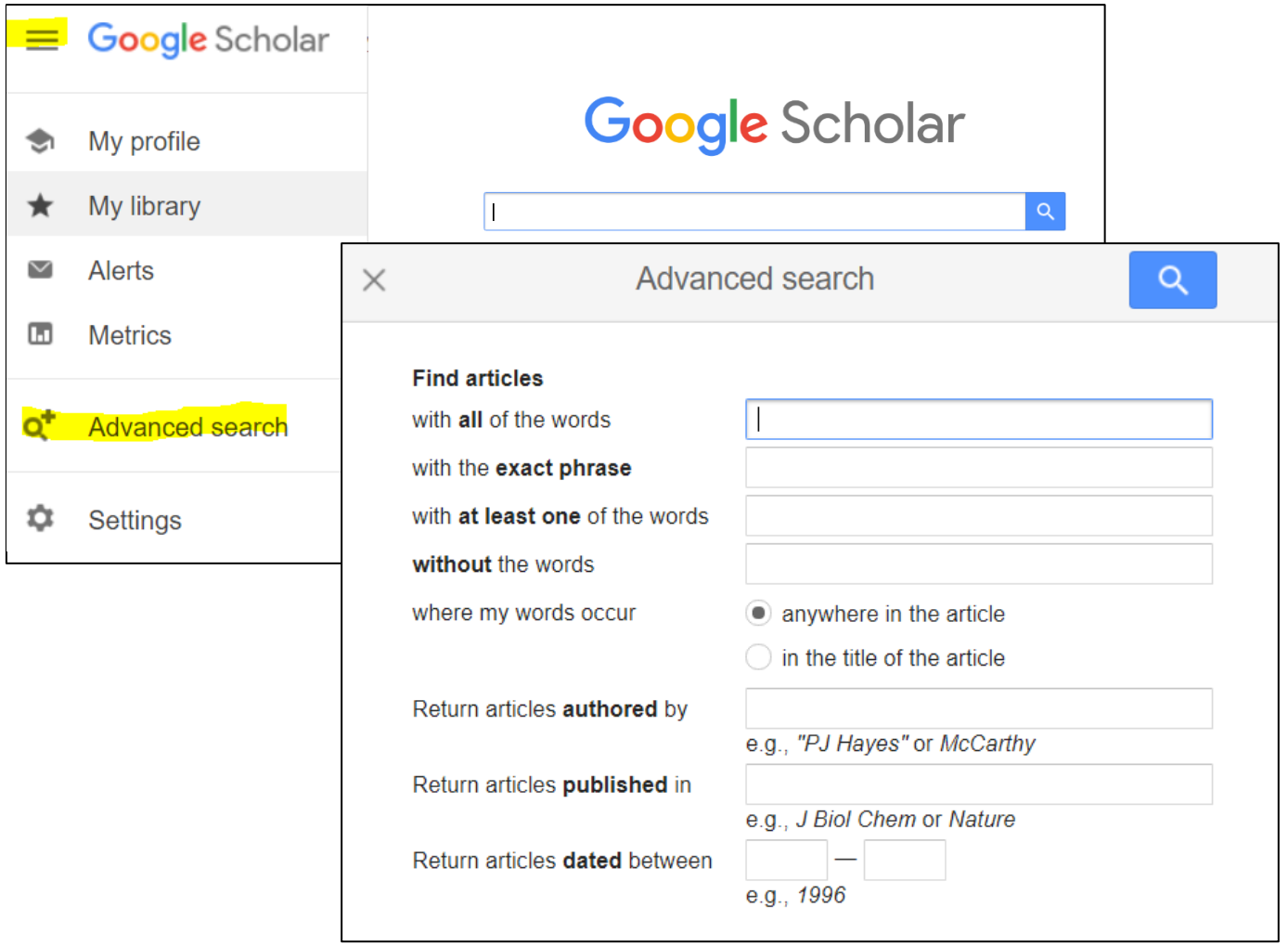
Advanced Search in Google Scholar

You can use the advanced search feature in Google Scholar to locate articles from a specific author, journal title, and within specific publication years.



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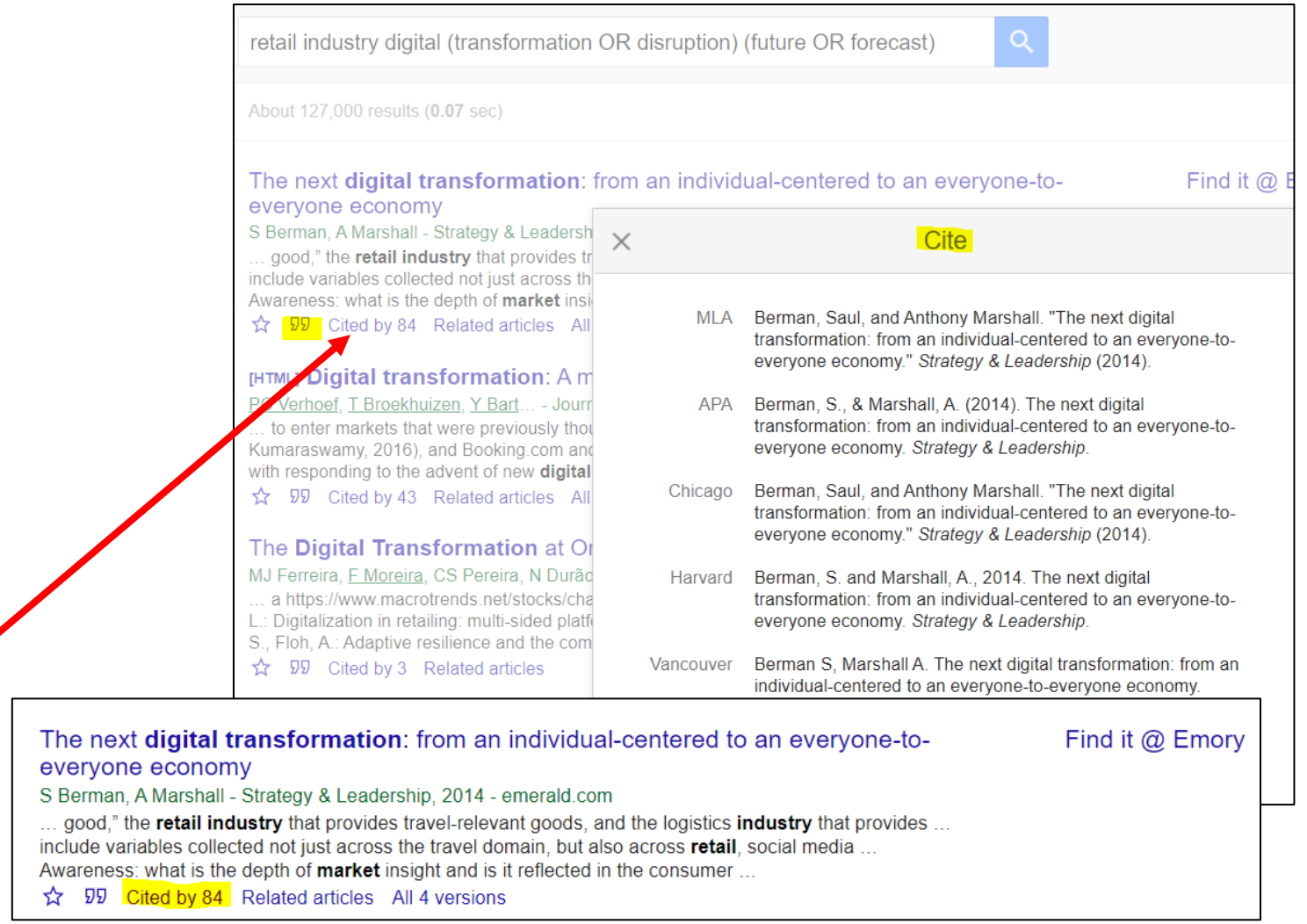
Citations in Google Scholar

Use Google Scholar to think like your faculty. Consider:

- Who is writing about my topic?
- How has the research/thinking around this topic changed over time?

Find out who has cited specific articles (see *Cited by* link under each article) and use the citing tool to make sure you are giving proper credit.



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Questions?

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